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The Dark

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THE DARK

To
Bertha Deane
from her friend.
Ellen M. H. Gates.

THE DARK

THE DARK

BY

ELLEN M. H. GATES

NEW YORK
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THE DARK

I am the Dark, the ancient one,
Before the days and years begun,
I hovered formless, silent, cold,
And filled the void. No page unrolled,
Makes mention of my timeless reign;
No rock on mountain-top or plain,
By scar or symbol, now can tell,
The secrets that I know so well.

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I am the Dark, the first to be;
My own beginning baffles me.
I seemed a thing apart, forgot,
Which was — because the Light was not.
I dwelt with Chaos; place I kept
As atom unto atom crept,
Till Order stood, with sinews set,
And law with law like brothers met.

I am the Dark, for still I stay,
With half my kingdom wrenched away.
There came an hour when all the black,
A filmy screen, was folded back.
Above me, through me, everywhere,
Were scarlet streaks and golden glare;
And mighty winds began to blow
The trailing mist-wreaths to and fro.

I am the Dark. The eye that sees
The midnight moons and Pleiades,
Must wait for me. I claim the sky
To show the splendors swinging high
In space so deep, and wide, and black,
That thought itself comes trembling back.
The Sun may show the sea and sod,
But I—the far-off fields of God!

I am the Dark. My paths I keep;
No hour too soon the light may creep
Above the hills, no moment late
The Sun may reach the western gate.
The shadows are my own; their wings
They spread above all breathing things,
Till joy and pain, and more and less,
Are one in sleep's unconsciousness.

I am the Dark. The under-world,
With soundless rivers onward whirled,
Is mine alone; and mine the lakes,
O'er which the morning never breaks.
I dwell in caverns, vast, unknown,
Whose walls are wrought from primal stone;
There Silence, Death, and I, can wait,—
Creation's grim triumvirate!

I am the Dark, and forth and back,
As God's own servant, robed in black,
I go and come. His dead I keep
Within my chambers while they sleep.
Who knows my doom? Perhaps, at last,
I may be ended, outward cast
From all that is, my deepest night
Invaded by resistless light!

ELLEN M. H. GATES.

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